

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

This case has been carefully reviewed and analyzed in view of the Official Action dated 29 November 2004. Responsive to the objections and rejections made in the Official Action, a substitute Figure 2 is submitted that incorporates the correction to the mis-labeling which the Examiner kindly pointed out. Claims 2, 5 as well as Claims 10-16 have been cancelled without disclaimer or prejudice. The limitations of Claims 2 and 5 have been incorporated into currently amended independent Claim 1 and new dependent Claim 17, respectively. Currently amended Claim 9 has been made the second independent Claim by merging Claim 1 with the original Claim 9. References to Claim 2 found in the other Claims have been changed to Claim 1 by the currently amended Claims. No new subject matter has been introduced.

In the Official Action of 29 November 2004, the Examiner objected to the drawing "Figure 2" because reference label "16" was inadvertently used to designate both the ring and the fabric. Appropriate correction has been made in the Replacement Drawing submitted herein. It is believed that the new drawing overcomes this objection by the Examiner.

The Examiner rejected Claims 1 and 5 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Haines (6,196,055). The Examiner further indicated that Claims 2-4 and 6-16 would be allowable if rewritten to avoid being dependent on a rejected base claim. The merging of Claim 1 with Claim 2 thus incorporates patentable subject matter into the currently amended base claim, which Applicant believes overcomes the Examiner's

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rejection. Claim 5 has been canceled, thereby rendering moot the Examiner's rejection of that Claim. Thus Applicant is of the belief that all of the Examiner's objections and rejections have been answered and overcome.

Thus, it is now believed that the subject Patent Application has been placed in condition for allowance, and such action is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,  
(For: ROSENBERG, KLEIN & LEE)



Harry Sernaker  
Registration #50,595  
Dated:  
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Suite #101  
3458 Ellicott Center Drive  
Ellicott City, MD 21043  
(410) 465-6678

Customer No.  
04586

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AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS

The attached drawing sheet includes a change to Figure 2. The labels have been corrected so as properly identify the connector 15 that had been improperly labeled '16'.

Attachment: One Replacement Sheet